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765 slipped down the tree and jumped clear of the fire, the other participants
372 called his totemic name.

Toward the end of this series of *ilanias*, the "workers" announced that they had finished cutting the poles. The leader, the *alawia*, hearing this, gave permission for the poles to be "cooked", i.e., burnt in a fire of blazing boughs, to provide a black ground on which to paint the designs. The leader
[202] also ordered that the *purunkiuas* (message sticks, Figs. 5, 6, 7), be sent out to the various totemic groups. These sticks intimated that the final *pukamani* ceremonies would take place in about twenty days.

765 (c) *The Bathurst Island Ilanias*

About a week before the final burial rituals of *Wanamperi*, a number of aborigines from Bathurst Island, accompanied by their wives and *Katapi*, the son of the dead man, made their camp and cleared a ceremonial ground not far from the second *milimika* used by the Melville Island people.

The Bathurst Island *ilanias*, under the leadership of an elderly aboriginal, *Jibungfialumi*, followed the traditional form, except that the first two phases were omitted, i.e., the fighting and the feeding of the "workers".

Three groups of songs were chanted to the accompaniment of the appropriate dances.

(i) The *Ningaui* songs and dances.
(ii) The mission lugger songs and dances.
(iii) The jabiru (*Tjalati*) songs and dances.

(i) *The Ningaui Songs and Dances*

533 The leader, *Jibungfialumi*, and his companions chanted the following
539 *Ningaui* songs. These are the literal translations.
765 "I am the head man of the *Ningaui*, I am, Eeh, Eeh."[67]

"I push aside the mangrove branches with my hands, Eeh, Eeh."

"The *Ningauis* are out hunting. The calls of the white cockatoos tell them that someone is coming, Eeh, Eeh."

A *Ningaui* woman, having just given birth to a child, sings—

"The flies are looking at me, the flies are crawling on my shoulder, Eeh, Eeh."

A *Ningaui* man, looking at his newly born child, sings—

"Little new-born man lying on the ground, Eeh, Eeh."

[825] [67] This is the call of the *Ningauis* which, the aborigines claim, they hear in the mangrove swamps of south-western Bathurst Island. It is possibly the call of one of the swamp birds.

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The two forms of fire-jumping (described earlier, p. 73) were also used in these rituals. 765

The *ilania* closed with the performance of the rite of *pumuni*, then the usual honey and mosquito calls.

5. THE FINAL PUKAMUNI RITUALS

(1) *The Pukamuni of Waniamperi*

For the sake of simplicity I will describe, under this heading, the rituals carried out during the last two days of the closing phases of the *pukamuni* ceremony of *Waniamperi*. These rituals took place about three months after burial and about a month after the performance of the first *ilania* and the receiving of the message stick (Fig. 57, G, H) from the Bathurst Island aborigines. [202]

During these final ceremonies, the aborigines divided themselves into two groups; the Melville Island men and women, under the leadership of *Wurarbui*, and the Bathurst Island men and women, with a few of the Melville Island aborigines linked with them totemically, under their leader, *Jibunglialumi*. [616]

The "workers" had cleared two dancing grounds: one, Fig. 4A, about fifty yards south of *Waniamperi's* grave, belonging to the Melville Island aborigines, and the other, Fig. 4B, about thirty yards east, to the people from Bathurst Island.

There were seven decorated burial poles on *milimika*, A, and three on B (Fig. 4). The three poles, although cut and painted by the local men, had been given, with their permission, to the Bathurst Island group who were responsible for the payment of them. [432]

The final rituals extended over two days. After both groups had performed *ilanias* in the middle of the first morning, they spent about six hours decorating each other with elaborate facial and body designs, one of which, that of *Wurarbui*, is illustrated on the frontispiece. Other facial designs are illustrated on Pl. 28. In the late afternoon all the participants, men and women, moved to the two *milimikas* near the grave (Fig. 4A, B), where they performed a series of dances until dark. The aborigines camped nearby, most of them within a hundred yards of the grave. The next morning the final rituals started. [302]

These *pukamuni* rituals can be divided into five distinct phases—

(*a*) The opening rituals.

(*b*) The songs and dances.

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765 778 Pl. 32 illustrates a number of objects used in the *pukamuni* and *kulama* rituals.

[411] [531] Pl. 32A, B, are two of the beautifully carved ceremonial spears known respectively as the male *pukamuni* spear, *tunkaringa*, and the female spear, *tunkaguni*. These are made purely as a gift to the dead, they appear to have no other function.

[114] [322] [412] At the time of Spencer's visit to Melville Island during 1911, the aborigines told him that these spears were cut with cockle shells. During 1920 a Melville Island man in Darwin gave me the same information, adding that the making of a double-sided female spear, 32B, with shell tools occupied an old man about three months, and the single-sided male spear, 32A, about two.

Pl. 32C is the forked throwing stick, *miluanta*, with which *Tjapara*, the moon-man injured *Purukupali*, and 32D, the plain throwing stick, *muruguna*. These are used in the *kulama* and *pukamuni* rituals, as well as for hunting and in personal quarrels.

[302] [413] Pl. 32E, G, are two interesting tools called *portas*, used for printing lines of dots on the bodies of the men and women. The colour is crushed to a thin paste, spread on a flat rock, and the *porta* rocked backward and forward in the paint to load the *porta*. The *porta* is then rocked on the body printing a line of dots.[99]

[515] [413] Pl. 32F is a curious ceremonial scratching stick used by the *Kilipaniati kulama* initiate to scratch himself during the period when he is not allowed to do so with his hands.

Pl. 32H, J, are two burial poles, *tudinis*, which were erected on the grave. These will be described in Section 10.

9. THE MESSAGE STICKS

202 765 Message sticks, under the general name of *purunkitas*, are used by the Tiwi for several purposes; personal requests to fellow tribesmen asking for presents or supplies (Fig. 5E); invitations to other groups to perform ceremonies (Fig. 5F, G, H), and in association with the *pukamuni* rituals.

When the ceremonial leader appointed the "workers" to cut the poles (p. 74), he also sent messengers carrying specially carved sticks (*purunkitas*) to each totemic group on Melville and Bathurst Islands, telling them when the final *pukamuni* rituals were about to start.

[301] [302] As each messenger neared his destination he painted himself entirely in white and donned his goose-feather ball, *tokwianga*, his chest ornaments,

[99] The lines of dots on *Wurirlui* (frontispiece) were made with a *porta*.

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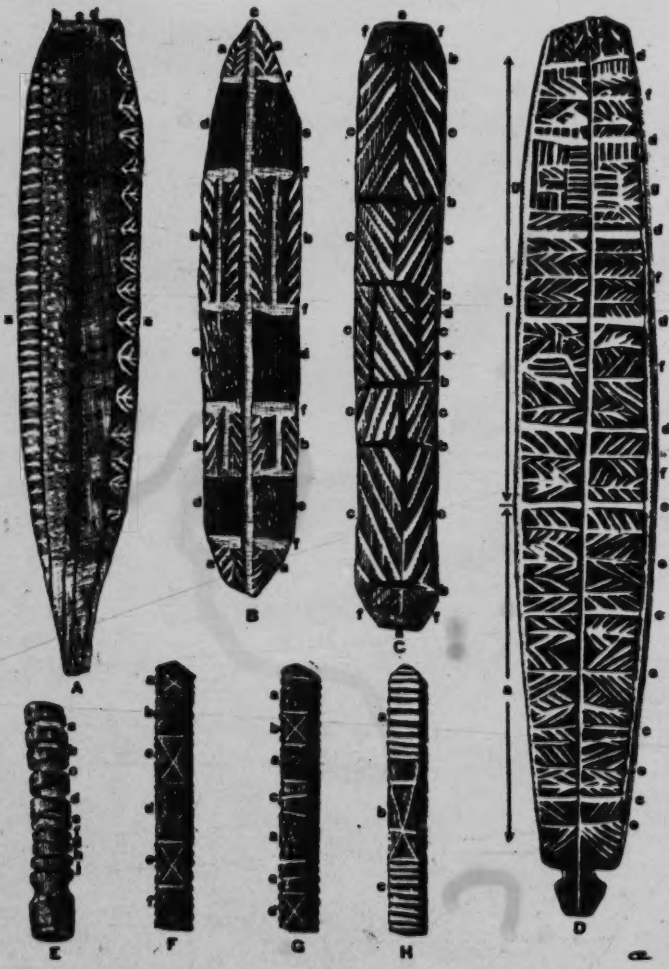

FIG. 5. *The Message Sticks*

A, Numanira; B, Puntubu; C, Muranapi; D, Pirilou; E, Secular; F, G, H, Pukamuni Ceremonial.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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202 765 [301] [302] [785] [574] [126] [184] [794] *palmajinis*, and cane armlets, *jairinis*. Then, taking a female *pukamuni* spear, *tunkapuni*, in his hand he seated himself within sight of the camp.

The local aborigines went out to welcome him, but on seeing the message stick and hearing the news, they mourned hysterically, cutting their heads and beating themselves with sticks.

When the mourning died down, the aborigines gave the messenger a meal, after which he returned to his own camp.

Although the general distribution of the totemic *purunkitas* has been discontinued in recent years, the aborigines who knew them well, made nine examples for me. It would seem that each totemic place had its own particular design, for when I showed the *purunkita* (Fig. 7D) to old *Tjamalampua* and *Malumerinita*, neither of whom had seen it previously, they recognized it immediately as a message stick which would have been sent to the *Mudungkala* totemic group of Buchanan Island, at the southern entrance to Apsley Straits. However, other *purunkitas*, i.e. (Fig. 5C; Fig. 5F, G, H; and Fig. 6A, E) are still being used in the *pukamuni* rituals.

During the early days of our stay, when the *ilanias* of *Waniamperi's pukamuni* were about to start, three men, two of them, *Marawani* and *Uramatjina*, being the chief mourners, made a journey to the Bathurst Island people for the purpose of giving them a *purunkita* and telling them the news.

A few days later a Bathurst Island man returned with the message stick, Fig. 5F, G, H, and verbal instructions relating to the forthcoming burial rituals.

[126] Although I did not see the message stick which *Marawani* and his companions carried to Bathurst Island, I was able to make a rubbing of another (Fig. 7C), which was sent to the same locality on the death of *Pulanimbuwi's* wife.

Later, old *Tjamalampua* sent another message stick (Fig. 7A, B), to the men of the *Mudungkala* totem of Buchanan Island, asking for European goods and food to pay the "workers" at the final rituals of *Waniamperi's pukamuni*.

Notification of Death

202 211 ×532 The designs on message stick, Fig. 7C, which an aboriginal carried to the Bathurst Island people, together with the news of the death of *Nulatini*, did not, in any way, refer to the message that accompanied it, but to topographical details along the motor road between Snake Bay and Cockle Point on Apsley Straits.

The upper section, *d*, is the aboriginal camp at Snake Bay, and the indentations, *a*, *a*, are the rocks on its shores. The cross-hatched rectangle in the

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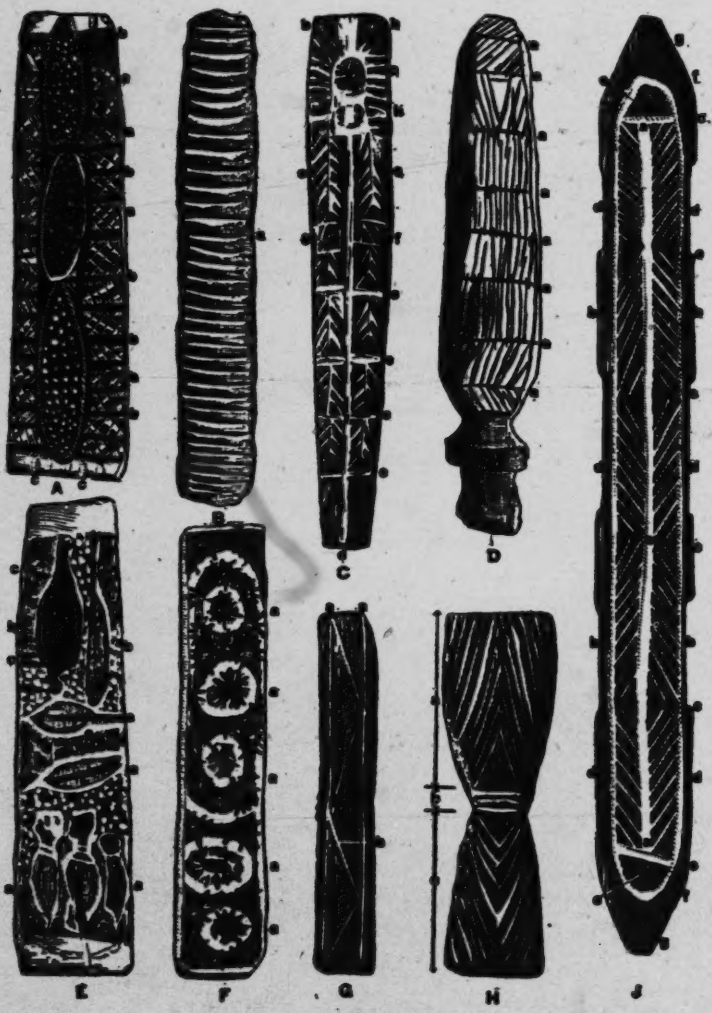

FIG. 6. *The Message Sticks*

A, B, Imilu; B, Ceremonial; C, Wuriapi; D, Secular; F, Kudjtumpi; G, H, Invitation to Secular Ceremony; J, Muranapi.

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centre of the message stick is the freshwater creek, Primbiamili, across which there is a crude bridge of logs (parallel lines *e*, *f*, on either side of the cross-hatched rectangle).

The long rectangle at the top of the message stick is the track between Snake Bay and Primbiamili Creek, and that at the bottom, from Primbiamili Creek to Cockle Point on Apsley Straits. Symbols *b*, *b*, are living stringy-bark trees by the roadside, and *c* is a group of dead trees.

The crossed squares *h*, *h*, indicate trees that had been cut down to clear a motor road between Snake Bay and Cockle Point. Apsley Strait, indicated by rectangle *g*, was crossed by the messenger in the dug-out canoe, *j*. The triangles at *n*, refer to the houses of the Bathurst Island Mission Station.

Pukamuni Ceremonial Purunkita

The return *purunkita* to that notifying the death of *Waniamperi* is shown on Fig. 51F, G, H. A messenger carried this *purunkita* to the Melville Island aborigines, together with the instructions about the conduct of the *pukamuni* from *Jibunglialumi*, the leader of the Bathurst Island group.

On side F, the crossed square, *a*, refers to *Urumatjina*, *c*, to *Marawani*, and *e*, to *Katopi*, the three chief mourners at the *pukamuni* of *Waniamperi*. *Katopi* is the son of the dead man.

Square *b* refers to instructions asking the "workers" to build a screen of boughs round the grave so that unauthorized people cannot see it; *d* refers to the cleaning of the grave site, and *f* to a request for the "workers" to dig out the roots and sticks in the ceremonial ground, so that the dancers will not injure their feet.

On side G, the crossed square *d*, is the *milimika* of the Bathurst Island group, and *b*, that of the Melville Island people. Groups of lines, *c*, *c*, refer to the number of "working men" to be appointed, while cross-hatched areas, *a*, *a*, indicate a request to the "workers" to do their tasks well and happily.

On side *H*, the lines, *a*, refer to burial poles to be erected around *Waniamperi's* grave; *b*, to the chief *pukamuni* men at Melville Island, and *c*, to the Bathurst *pukamuni* men whom *Jibunglialumi* will bring with him.

Pukamuni Ceremonial Purunkita

Fig. 6a is a *purunkita* sent by an old man, *Tjamalampua*, to another old man, *Tipumbriaria*, in Bathurst Island, asking him to bring many aborigines to the forthcoming *pukamuni* ceremony at Melville Island. The cross-lines, *a*, indicate the required number of men.

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Kudjatumpi

This *purunkita* (Fig. 6*b*) was sent to the March-fly totemic centre at Kudjatumpi, southern Melville Island. The designs on the message stick were painted, instead of being engraved, because of the difficulty of cutting the circular patterns.

The white circles and ovals, *a*, *a*, are backwaters and lagoons at the mouth of the freshwater stream at Kudjatumpi and the star-shaped designs, lilies growing on the surface of the water.

Wuriupi

Fig. 6*c* is an engraved message stick sent to members of the fire totemic group at Wuriupi, eastern Melville Island.

The disc, *a*, indicates the sun-woman, *Wuriupranala*, travelling across the sky, the radiating lines, *b*, the beams of light at sunrise, *f* and *g*, the mid-day camps of the sun-woman (p. 172). The long line, *d*, is the path of the sun-woman across the firmament.

Pandanus trees in the Milky Way are indicated at *c*, *c*, and similar designs and breaks in the galaxy by the transverse lines, *e*, *e*.

Numanira

The *purunkita* (Fig. 5*a*) belonged to the totemic red-ochre group at Numanira, west of Karslake Island.

The left-hand band of short transverse bars at *a*, represents the lines of coloured ochres in the sands of the sea-shore; the dots on the next band, *b*, to the right, are the oysters on the rocks at Numanira; band *c* indicates the reefs of red and yellow ochres covered at high tide; *d* is the motor road along the cliff on the mainland opposite Karslake Island, and *e*, the trees on the shore of Karslake Island, opposite Numanira.

Puntubu

Fig. 5*b* illustrates a *purunkita* which was sent to Puntubu, on the upper reaches of the Tjipripu River, central Melville Island, one of the totem places of the eucalyptus-tree woman, *Aragoutourina*.

The central line, *c*, is the Tjipripu River, which flows into Curtis Haven. On the banks of that river grow many *tulini* palms (symbols *b*, *b*, *b*,) from which the aborigines make their palm-leaf baskets. The roots of the palms, *a*, *a*, are indicated at either end of the message stick, and reefs of black and yellow rocks on the banks of the Tjipripu River at *d*, *d*, and *e*, *e*, *e*,

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respectively. The junctions of those rocks are indicated by the transverse lines, *f*, *f*, *f*.

Muranapi

A message stick to invite the aborigines of Muranapi, southern Melville Island, to a *pukamuni*, is illustrated on Fig. 6J.

The central white line is Muranapi Creek; the groups of sloping lines on either side are the eucalyptus trees on its banks, and the transverse panels, such as *c*, *c*, pandanus trees on the subsidiary watercourses.

The semi-circles, *e*, *e*, on either end of the *purunkita*, represent the hills, *g*, *g*, the high ground, *f*, *f*, the sandy soil on the shores of Muranapi Creek, and the indentations, *d*, *d*, etc., on either edge of the *purunkita*, the *tulini* palms which grow on the edge of the fresh water.

Muranapi

Fig. 5C is another message stick sent to Muranapi, this time to the *Mandubuka* (blow-fly) totemic group.

The central lines, *a*, *a*, at both ends of the *purunkita* represent the salt-water creek, Duniau. On this creek is the totemic place, *d*, a rock about thirty feet long and six feet above the level of high tide. The transverse lines, *b*, *b*, etc., are freshwater creeks which flow into Duniau.

The sloping cuts within rectangle *d*, symbolize cracks in the totemic rock of *Mandubuka*. The remainder of the sloping cuts, as at *c*, *c*, etc., represent bloodwood trees and other eucalypts growing on the banks of the freshwater streams. Marks *f*, *f*, etc., on either end of the *purunkita*, indicate a point of land at the mouth of Duniau Creek.

Pirilou

Fig. 5D illustrates a message stick sent to the catfish totemic group of Pirilou on the Goose Creek swamps, central Melville Island.

The middle line is the Goose Creek, *a* (lower) being the salt-water section, and *b* (upper), the fresh-water. The transverse lines, *c*, *c*, etc., are subsidiary mangrove creeks, and *d*, *d*, etc., the freshwater lagoons or backwaters of the Goose Creek swamps. At *e*, *e*, etc., are mangrove trees on the shore of the salt-water stream, *a*; and *f*, *f*, etc., living paper-bark, and *g*, *g*, dead paper-bark trees in the freshwater lagoons.

Imilu and Buchanan Island

A *purunkita* (Fig. 6A, E), partly engraved, partly painted, was taken from Snake Bay first to the aborigines at Imilu, north-western Melville Island,

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then to a group on Buchanan Island, notifying them of the forthcoming burial rituals.

The three large ovals on Fig. 5A are graves on Melville Island, the short transverse lines, *b*, *b*, the *pukamuni* poles, and the short lines, *c*, *c*, at the bottom of the *purunkita*, the tracks leading to the grave. The cross-hatched panels, *a*, *a*, represent the grass around the grave site.

On the opposite side, Fig. 5B, the designs, *a*, *a*, are *pukamuni* poles, and *b*, *b*, old graves surrounded by poles (short lines, *c*, *c*). The dots represent the mourners at the grave.

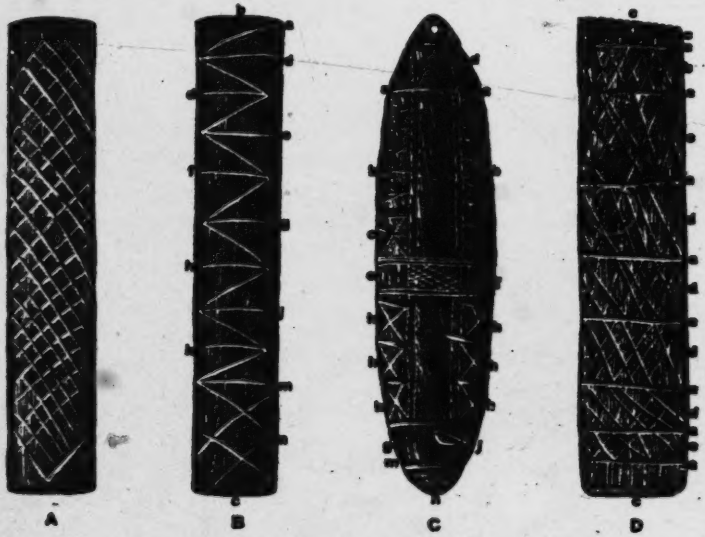

FIG. 7. *The Message Sticks*

A, B, Buchanan Island; C, Notification of Death; D, Buchanan Island.

Buchanan Island

Fig. 7A, B, are two sides of another *purunkita*, which was sent to the *Mudungkala* (eucalyptus tree) totemic group on Buchanan Island (adjacent to the Bathurst Island Mission Station). This *purunkita* asked for a supply of European goods and food so that the "workers" could be paid at the closing rituals of *Waniompui's pukamuni* on Melville Island.

The diamond patterns on Fig. 7A refer to the numbers of men in large the

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Mudungkala totemic group. On the reverse side (Fig. 72), the zig-zag line *a*, is the road between Snake Bay (upper end, *b*), and Cockle Point, in Apsley Straits (lower end, *c*). At *d*, *d*, is a request for two six-pound bags of sugar; *e*, for tea; *f*, sufficient printed calico for a loin cloth; *g*, three sticks of tobacco; *h*, a tin of tobacco; *j*, a pair of trousers; *k*, a pocket knife, and *m*, a pipe. The crossed lines at *n* indicate the camp of *Tjamalumpua*, the sender of the message stick.

Buchanan Island

The message stick (Fig. 70) refers to the Jaulama jungle, about a half a mile south of our camp.

This stick was sent by the chief mourner of the Melville Island *pukamuni* group to the members of the ironwood, *Mudungkala*, totemic group of Buchanan Island, and adjacent Bathurst Islanders, notifying them of the oncoming burial rituals. The designs on the stick, however, have no relationship to either the ironwood tree group or the message they would receive. The short vertical lines at *c*, *c*, are living paper-bark trees, and the transverse lines, *a*, *a*, dead paper-bark trees in the Jaulama jungle. At *b*, are the roots of the trees, and at panels *c*, the vines of the edible *roko* yams on the branches of the paper-barks. The four panels, *d*, *d*, etc., are jungle trees, and *e* indicates their roots.

Invitation to Adjoining Tribe

[574] Fig. 60, H, illustrates a message stick (not associated with a *pukamuni* ceremony) from the Melville Island people, inviting the aborigines on the Coburg Peninsula to pay them a visit and to perform some of their mainland ceremonies.[97]

On the obverse side, Fig. 60, the parallel lines, *a*, *a*, symbolize the shores of the Coburg Peninsula, and the zig-zag line, *b*, a mangrove creek in the same locality.

On the reverse side, 6H, the V-shaped patterns, *a*, indicate the men who have been invited from the Coburg Peninsula, and those in the lower section, *b*, the women. The short transverse lines at *c*, represent the Melville Island men who will act as hosts to the visitors.

Secular

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Fig. 5E is a secular message stick sent to an aboriginal, *Marawani*, who was on a visit to Darwin, asking him to bring back the following goods; *a*,

[97] This message stick suggests that, at the present time, members of the mainland tribes and those of the Tiwi, occasionally visit each other.

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tobacco, *b*, matches, *c*, a pipe, *d*, a calico loin cloth, *e*, a pair of short trousers, *f*, a shirt, *g*, sugar, *h*, tea, and *j*, flour.

Secular

Fig. 60 is a carved stick whose designs were thought out by the artist as he walked along the sandy beach near our camp. Although not a message stick, the illustration is included in the section as an example of how an aboriginal expresses his mental images through the medium of simple wood carving.

The horizontal lines, *a*, *a*, symbolize the waves breaking on the beach, and the groups of short lines, a pattern of shallow gutters which had been formed on the sandy shore by the fresh water seeping from a nearby lagoon.

10. THE BURIAL POLES

The painted and decorated poles of Melville and Bathurst Islands attracted the attention of all the early visitors. Sir Gordon Bremer in 1824, possibly the first European to see the *pukamuni* poles, when writing about a grave he saw on Melville Island, states: "The situation was one of such perfect retirement and repose that it displayed considerable feeling in the survivors who placed it there and the simple order which pervaded the spot would not have disgraced a civilised people. It was an oblong square open at the foot, the remaining end and sides being railed around with trees, 7 feet to 8 feet high, some of which were carved with stone or shell and further ornamented by rings of wood. On the tops of these were placed the waddies (throwing sticks) of the deceased. The grave was raised above the level of the earth, but the raised part was not more than 3 feet long. At the head was placed a piece of a canoe (probably a bark basket) and a spear and round the grave were several little baskets made of the fan-palm leaf, which, from their small size, we thought had been placed there by the children of the departed. Nothing could exceed the neatness of the whole; the sand and earth were cleared away from the sides and not a shrub or weed was suffered to grow within the area."[99]

I have quoted Sir Gordon Bremer's description in full because it shows that, even after a hundred and thirty years, the aborigines of Melville Island,

[99] Bremer, 1843. From this description it would appear that Bremer chanced to see a grave not long after the aborigines had completed the final rituals. Had any time elapsed the whole area would have been covered with grass and leaves, for, after the *pukamuni* ceremonies, nobody is interested in either the grave or the poles.

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mainland, it will be remembered, are with preference postponed until after night-fall. The women were not permitted to take part in the proceedings, but were, indeed, kept at some considerable distance off. Youths and male children were allowed to join in the ceremonies without apparent restriction. When we met with men, hunting in the bush, and they had been convinced of our *bona fide* intentions, they would approach us in groups of from two to four, and deliver up their long spears to us. Several of the young men would, in the meantime, run into the woods as messengers to summon others who were as yet unaware of the presence of the strangers in their haunts.

A corrobboree[1] having been decided upon, the signal or invitation to take part in the event is sounded by two or three of the older men, who have previously arranged it among themselves. This initial note is a long-drawn, continuous yell resembling the German diphthong ö! Other members immediately fall in with the same note and are joined, at intervals, by others excitedly rushing up to take their stand alongside of those who started the call. The monosyllabic "ö" is kept continuous by the combined efforts of many voices, each of which individually expires for a moment, after the lungs' capacity for air has been completely exhausted. The note is, however, taken up again immediately after a fresh supply of air has been inhaled. The weirdness of the monotone is suddenly broken by the powerful voice of the "master" of the ceremonies, who brings forth a penetrating, but abrupt, order resembling "wahoi." This is instantly and collectively repeated by all others present. A momentary silence follows and allows the sombre trunks of the surrounding forest to reiterate the final word in ringing echoes.

The leader once more gives the note; this time in a slightly modified form resembling a long-continued "ye," that merges imperceptibly into a "yi." A sudden shrill "wahoi-hoi" brings that note also to a stop. A deadly silence prevails.

The primary appellation now being over, the performers congregate themselves into a compact group. In the meanwhile much excited vociferation ensues from every mouth, young as well as old. At this stage their eyes make a survey of any neighbouring encampment and if, by chance, a likely performer is noticed who has not heeded the appeal and is shirking his duty by non-attendance, he is furiously implored, at times abusively, to join the assemblage of performers. The leader now emerges from the group at a walking pace and is followed, in single file, by all participants, each in his turn falling into regular order as though his place had previously been allotted to him. The course taken by the leader is a winding one; walking, at first, some distance away from the point of starting but returning eventually thereto. The musical accompaniment is started afresh, and though not exactly melodious to the European ear, it is certainly a remarkably clever and original production on the part of the aboriginal. The nearest way we might describe it in words is that it is in the form of a trill, produced by a rapidly repeated

[1] Compare also H. Klaatsch, *Proc. Austr. Assoc. Adv. Science*, 1907, vol. xi, pp. 589 and 590.